

14

SURE

— 30 —

23 Aril. 1935

३५८

Chief of Rose, Pallash

Operational/2 JPPR

Info.com

三

1945/Generation Dr. Wilhelm MÖRTEL - Cart L. POMER

1. Herewith primarily for the record a photocopy of the report (and rough translation thereof) prepared for AIPPA by Dr. Wilhelm HÖTTLE, entitled "My Acquaintance with Curt FÜCHTNER". HÖTTLE wrote this shortly after he heard of the arrest of FÜCHTNER and VOLKELA, and after he briefly discussed the case with VOLKELA (U.S.), his contact to ZEPPELIN. The report was actually written on the advice of U.S. From HÖTTLE's correspondence, we know that he regarded this method of putting himself on record to be very clever, as he stipulated that the report was ~~meant~~ to be used internally only (meaning German staff), but he could (and did, during interrogation) claim he had reported to the U.S. organization with which he was in contact. HÖTTLE thereby established his "Rueckenschwung", but had no intention of volunteering his knowledge of the case, which certainly could have been helpful; rather, as he stated in letters to his closest associate, Baron Harry MAST, he fully intended to say nothing unless the Americans knew he was involved in the case, and thus only if they approached him.

2. It will be noted, as pointed out in other reports, that this report is very similar to the one prepared by ~~WOLFGANG~~ L for CIC Agent ~~WOLFGANG~~ (with the exception that ~~WOLFGANG~~ L indulges rather freely in oblique attacks on other ~~WOLFGANG~~ kites in his report to AIPPA, to reflect attention from himself).

3. A carbon copy of this report was found among the papers confiscated on HÖTTLE's arrest, so AIPPA/VIETNA are already provided with copies of this document; this base also made the information in the report available to [] for interrogation of HÖTTLE.

APPROVED BY

Date originated: 15 APR 11 53

21 T8
3 copy (w/1 copy of anal)
3 copy " "

Report in German - NSM

INDEX

2 Atto: Hu

SECRET

三

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCES METHODSEXEMPT 10N 382B
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2006

~~SECRET~~
~~TRANSLATION~~

~~SECRET~~
~~TRANSLATION~~

~~161~~

My Acquaintance with Curt PONGER

I met PONGER in 1946 during my stay in Nuernberg where I was held as a witness in the Justice Building. PONGER, at that time, and apparently also VERSER, was employed with the prosecution authorities in the trial of members of the SS economic and administrative headquarters, and therefore had no business connection with me since I was only witness in the trials of the major war criminals as well as being interrogated in the so-called Wilhelmstrasse trials. PONGER, however, was present during my interrogations, which often was the case in Nuernberg. He impressed me at that time as being especially pleasant, as he comported himself well both from human and technical aspects in contrast to many other interrogators.

Some time in the spring of 1948 PONGER came to Alt-Ausse to request me to come to Nuernberg again for another witness deposition. By this time I was already released from prison and understandably had no desire to return to Nuernberg, so it was very fortunate that PONGER did not locate me in Alt-Ausse at this time. (I happened to be in Salzburg.) PONGER came, however, a couple of weeks later and attached so much importance to my coming to Nuernberg that I was forced to accept, since, after all, I was living in the U.S. Zone of Austria. On PONGER's direction I reported to a certain Mr. Bromberg, who had his office in the Landesgericht in Salzburg, and was responsible for the issue of that sort of travel papers. When I discovered that Mr. Bromberg did not regard this matter as being of so great importance or requiring so much haste as did PONGER, I ^{wrote up} once again the former ^{of} delaying tactics and was actually successful in avoiding appearing, the trial taking place in the meantime without me. So this time I didn't go to Nuernberg in contrast to

Att #1 to
EGLA-3281

~~SECRET~~
①

201 C J UN
[REDACTED]

another witness from Alt-Ausse who PONGER had also directed to appear. This is the former Estonian General Land Director and Minister President during the German occupation of the Baltic lands, Dr. MAE, who also lives in Alt-Ausse. MAE is ~~still living~~, a writer with strongly anti-Communist tendencies, who enjoys a good reputation among the Austrian emigration. Just a little while ago, under the pseudonym POLINIUS, he wrote a very remarkable anti-Bolshevik brochure, "Have No Fear of Soviet Russia".

I had, at this time, already begun to work on my book, "The Secret Front", and told PONGER about it. He was very interested in the book and explained his interest on the basis that he was also a member of the "clan". (He described himself as a former Captain in the OSS). PONGER promised me assistance in getting the book published in foreign language editions in the U.S.A. and other foreign states where he claimed to have good connections. When my book appeared in 1950 I sent PONGER a copy and requested of him his promised assistance. PONGER actually managed to arrange that my book could appear in the very distinguished Swiss Europa Publishing House, and to this end personally conducted negotiations with the owner of this publishing house, Dr. OPRECHT. PONGER received for this a commission which was equal to $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of the retail price. In the U.S.A. and in Sweden, where PONGER was apparently especially trying to obtain a license, he had no success. PONGER also tried without success to help secure publication of my articles concerning historical-political matters.

However, in this connection, it came to light -- my articles were to be illustrated -- that PONGER possessed a large photo library with exceedingly interesting historical and newsworthy political pictures and we therefore did some business in this connection. I bought from PONGER various photos, for

example, from the First and Second World Wars, and also, I had him enlarge or make copies of various photos which were in my possession. In this connection there developed a rather voluminous correspondence between us, and I made several payments to PONGER which, in spite of the very fair prices, embraced considerable sums (on one occasion alone, nearly 1,000 Schillings). All these letters from PONGER, as well as carbon copies of my letters to him, are available. They commence on the 27th of August 1948 and continue through the 7th of October 1952. At the end of December 1952 also, I sent PONGER a New Year's greeting card since he sent me a Christmas card.

Aside from these purely business connections (Nuernberg, publishing, and photos), I had very few other contacts with PONGER. In the period of our acquaintance, that is, starting with his second visit in Alt-Aussee in the late spring of 1948 to the end of 1952, I saw him perhaps 6 or 7 times, including 3 or 4 times in Alt-Aussee, once in Fuschl, once in Bad Ischl, and the last time in Germany where he took me in his car. However, it appears that PONGER was frequently in Alt-Aussee but did not always meet me since he usually appear without previous warning. He would always telephone only after he was already here. Once he came with his wife, Verma, twice with his brother-in-law, VENGER (that is, at my house). His eldest daughter was also with him once or twice but I didn't see her. It is also possible that his mother was with him one or another time but I am not sure (it is, of course, possible that other people were with him). Usually he connected his trips -- according to his stories -- with visits to his family when his family was spending a vacation in some West Austrian resort. PONGER's family spent the summer of 1951 in Bodendorf am Ossiachersee, with Ebner, and 1952 in Windischgarsten, Upper Austria. When Mrs. PONGER was not with the children, PONGER's mother stayed with them. In

NET

any case, so PONGER says, therefore, it would appear that PONGER visited the West Zone of Austria quite frequently and remained for considerable periods there.

Concerning conversation themes which go beyond the business matters described above, I can remember the following. During his first visit PONGER was interested in the allegedly buried microfilm of the RSHA, which film supposedly contained all important files. I could provide him with no information. Then he was also interested in the whereabouts of the former Chief of Amt IV of the RSHA, MUELLER, who had disappeared, and especially for MUELLER's deputy for Jewish affairs, Adolf Eichmann. He repeatedly asked me about this man and also told me that "Joint" (or some other Jewish world organization) had placed a reward of \$100,000 on Eichmann's head, ~~where~~ PONGER felt I could certainly earn since I doubtless knew where EICHMANN was. (EICHMANN was in Alt-Ausse at the time of the German collapse, and left his family here). This special interest of PONGER for EICHMANN and certain other circumstances about which I will remark led me to the conclusion that PONGER was working for the Israeli intelligence service or some other Israeli office. I explained to myself his frequent visits to Alt-Ausse on the basis that Mrs. EICHMANN was living here under her maiden name LIBEL, and I thought that PONGER was trying to determine in this manner where EICHMANN was hiding. He also requested of me fairly directly that I place him in contact with Mrs. LIBEL or that I interest myself in her activities as he was convinced that EICHMANN visited his family. After I declared that I was unable to do anything in this connection, he did not mention this theme again, except that about a year ago, he told me that Israel now had exact information that EICHMANN was with the Grand Lefti and asked whether I could not set up some sort of contact there since every lead

was important and would be paid for from the \$100,000 which had been set as reward for the capture of EICHMANN. I maintained complete reserve in this discussion although I knew that EICHMANN was not in Egypt. This interest of PONGER for EICHMANN was, however, not the only reason why I computed that PONGER worked for the Israeli intelligence service. He told me once — this was about August 1951 — that he was acquainted with several responsible people who supposedly worked for the Israeli IS in Vienna, among whom were also former members of the American IS. These people were interested very much in Gendarmerie Major Valentin TARRA in Bad Aussee, and he asked if I knew the man. I answered in the affirmative and told him what I knew about TARRA, that is, that I regard him as a Russian or at least Communist agent, etc. PONGER was also interested in this connection in the former representative Albrecht GAISWINKLER, and the Communist Party leader, Sepp PLIESEIS. (It was possible for me to say quite a bit about these personalities; as a matter of fact, I wrote about them about a year ago in an article in the Spiegel, in which article I concerned myself with the Bolshevik infiltration activities of this group. These people will also appear in a book of mine which will be published in England and the U.S. in the near future.) It didn't occur to me at that time, however, that perhaps PONGER himself was interested in TARRA and the other two and possibly to take up contact with them. This would be an explanation for his frequent visits in Alt-Ausse and also in Ischl where he went several times — PLIESEIS lives there — although PONGER explained that he wanted to make a photographic story about the Ischl Glass Works. If PONGER actually, in this case, was acting on behalf of the Soviet Secret Service, my information about these three people could only have been regarded as positive. The last two times that PONGER stopped here he did not stay overnight at Alt-Ausse or Bad Aussee but instead in Grundlsee

which he explained saying that he was making a photo story about a woodcarver there. Interesting in this connection may possibly be that in the plaster works in Grundlsee a man has been working since about last summer who may be regarded as a leading functionary of the Communist Party and is supposed to have received his training in Russia. (although overtly he does not appear as a Communist). This man is named LINICK (exact spelling unknown) and lives in the village of Wim, a part of Alt-Ausse. PONGER, however, never asked me anything about this man but became interested in him because I believe that the Russians are preparing an important strong-point in the Totengebirge for Partisan Warfare in the coming crisis for which I have various indications. In any case it appears to me remarkable that this LINICK, who allegedly possessed a successful vegetable business suddenly appeared in Grundlsee as a common laborer in the plaster factory.

Otherwise PONGER did not interest himself for other people although he did ask me several times about Dr. MAE, which, however, I always answered that he could look this man up. I do not know whether PONGER ever visited him.

Of other people only the name of the former Colonel of the Geheime Feld Polizei (GFP), KRIECHBAUM was mentioned. PONGER knew that I was acquainted with him from earlier days and also had been with him in prison and PONGER also met him in Nuernberg and remained in contact with him. In the summer of 1951 when PONGER visited me here, he told me that he had seen KRIECHBAUM, who would be happy to meet me sometime. If I was also interested, he (PONGER) could arrange a meeting. In this case I should write KRIECHBAUM a letter since this was required by protocol (Rank 8), the brief to say approximately that I

would be very happy to see him and he would then set up a date agreeable to both of us. KRIECHBAUM suggested that we meet on the 18th of August which I can reconstruct from the applicable letter of PONGER's, but whether we then actually met on this day I do not recall any more, but our meeting was definitely in August. PONGER brought KRIECHBAUM from Reichenhall to Salzburg, and I joined them -- insofar as I can recall, it was KRIECHBAUM's car -- and we drove off to Fuschl where we drank coffee in a cafe on the lake. The conversation was mainly limited to the exchange of old common memories. Only toward the end KRIECHBAUM told me that my friendship with Eric KERNMAYER was regarded with concern in "pertinent" circles -- he meant, of course, intelligence circles and asked what was the status there. I was able to explain to KRIECHBAUM at once that although KERNMAYER was once a colleague of mine when I worked for CIC AUSTRIA, we had parted ways long since. Since KERNMAYER, in his professional and human attributes was completely impossible, KRIECHBAUM indicated that he was very relieved to hear this, without, however, making any concrete remarks concerning possible plans which might involve me. PONGER, on the other hand, mentioned during the return journey (he brought me back to St. Gilgen) that this conversation would certainly have very valuable results since KRIECHBAUM was a leading man of the Firm SCHNEIDER. (He had, by the way, already in his letter of the 5th of August remarked that KRIECHBAUM would be able, by the meeting of 18 August which he had set, to make concrete suggestions, but PONGER, neither in writing nor either orally filled in what he meant by this.) I could only imagine that it would involve an offer of joining the Firm SCHNEIDER. This role in 1951 and a year later once again as go-between led me to the suspicion that PONGER was perhaps a member of the Firm SCHNEIDER and perhaps on behalf of KRIECHBAUM -- who is well-known as a first-class authority on the Southeast -- was working out of Vienna. I never

(1) 2

asked about this, however, and other later occurrences led me away from this opinion. Later I imagined that PONGER was involved in some kind of business dealing with KRIECHBAUM -- for details see below.

In September 1952 PONGER visited me again in Alt-Ausse. He spent only an hour with me, during which he asked whether I would not like to go to Germany with him and his brother-in-law in October, which trip he had suggested to me a year ago. (We had often spoken about the fact that I frequently had things to do in Germany but was forced to consider carefully every trip since the German railroads were so expensive. PONGER had suggested that he would take me in his car whenever he went there. Whether he then in 1951 actually went there is not known to me.) Furthermore, PONGER stated that it would be now a very appropriate time to speak with KRIECHBAUM again since now the question of a German intelligence service had reached the acute stage and had, of course, shoved off my plans until such a service was actually constituted -- I had actually told this to PONGER after he had suggested to me several times that I take up contact with KRIECHBAUM and place my intelligence possibilities at the disposal of the Firm SCHNEIDER. We could also, in this opportunity, speak with KRIECHBAUM, and he would arrange his trip so that it would, as closely as possible, fit my wishes. He suggested a meeting with KRIECHBAUM in the latter's apartment in Reichenhall on the week-end of 11-12 October which I turned down since I had other plans for this week-end. I travelled to Salzburg on the 13th of October where Mr. Walter LAUBER picked me up from the train. PONGER had introduced me to LAUBER a few days earlier in Ischl. I happened to be in Ischl then and PONGER telephoned to my wife in Alt-Ausse who told him that he might possibly find me in the railroad station restaurant. He came there and I went outside with him where he introduced LAUBER so that

SECRET

310715Z JUN 52

I would recognize him in the event that he could personally pick me up in Salzburg. LAUBER came on the 13th of October and took me in his Volkswagen to Reichenhall where PONGER was staying in the Hotel Deutsches Haus or Deutscher Hof. PONGER had already been to get KRIECHBAUM but KRIECHBAUM was not then in Reichenhall, so the meeting had been arranged in Munich. We met KRIECHBAUM in the restaurant next to the autobus stop next to the Hotel Schottenhamel (in the afternoon of the 13th). The conversation was once again as a year previously, largely academic. KRIECHBAUM felt that the situation in the field of the German intelligence service was still fully unclear and felt that the Americans naturally would never abandon a man such as Dr. SCHNEIDER, so that he would certainly play a role, etc., etc. No concrete matters were mentioned. KRIECHBAUM appeared to be quite ill and stated that he had been exceedingly sick for several months.

Now a few days before my trip I happened to learn through a Criminal Police official with the State Police in Salzburg named ANGERER -- not directly, but through a middle-man -- that a certain Curt PONGER in Vienna was suspected of working for the Soviet intelligence service (the report was in another connection where the name PONGER was mentioned). I had thereupon sent to the Criminal Police official ANGERER, a written notice to the effect that I knew a certain Curt PONGER and told him what I knew about him. This journey with PONGER therefore appeared to me to be that much more interesting as I hoped now to have opportunity to draw conclusions from PONGER's behavior. I had great doubt that PONGER could be a Russian agent, for his entire behavior of the last few years, at least in dealings with me, argued absolutely against that. The man had been a Captain in the OSS, was then an official in Nuernberg where certainly in the last phase of the trials the certain "Solon Bolshevik".

Q.E.D.

Note of 1945-46, in great measure, had disappeared among the Americans; he became then representative of an American firm in Austria. He had seen to it that my book, "The Secret Front", appeared in Switzerland, a book which is certainly, for Russians and Communists, exceedingly unpleasant, and which also has been banned in the Soviet Union to the extent that individual Soviet Commandants have conducted raids to impede the book. On the trip PONGER conducted himself in a manner beyond suspicion. He didn't even ask what I was doing, and we saw each other practically just a few times at meals. It was quite easy to note that he had something to discuss with KRIECHBAUER which he didn't want to do in my presence. He arranged also with KRIECHBAUER that he would telephone him by the terms of which the two would meet again. Whether they actually did meet is not known to me. I drove with PONGER and LAUBER on the 15th of October to Nuernberg where the two had something to do. Since I had nothing to do in Nuernberg, I immediately took a train to Duesseldorf where I had made arrangements and met these two again on the 18th of October in Bonn. I had already finished all my business there, for which reason I took a train to Stuttgart on the same day and met PONGER and LAUBER there on the 20th of October. I arranged a visit for them in the Porsche Works about which they wanted to make a photo story for the U.S.A. and we drove ~~there~~ on the same day to Munich where we remained overnight and then drove to Alt-Ausse. The two wanted only to go to Salzburg, but I prevailed upon them to take me to Alt-Ausse and they stayed overnight in Grundlsee. They wanted to try to make some pictures on the next morning of spawning fish. Just at this time was the beginning of the spawning time of the Chars (Saibling). Since then I have not seen PONGER or the other two and received no further letters with the exception of the Christmas card I mentioned.

(4)

After I learned of the arrest of PONGER and VERGNER, I resolved to inform the office of Dr. SCHNEIDER and present after the oral comments I have already made a sort of memory protocol in writing of what I know about PONGER. These comments may I have only be used with my specific approval, these may be given to another authority only with such approval.

In closing I would like to mention a couple of details regarding the whole case which perhaps could be of interest in one direction or another. In all my conversations with PONGER there were never mentioned, insofar as I can recall, names of people currently engaged in intelligence activities except for those I have mentioned and two others whom I should like to mention here. One is a certain Dr. OFCZAREK, who supposedly uses the cover name Dr. SCHAEFFER. PONGER, I believe, also mentioned him in the conversation mentioned above in Munich on the 13th of October when KRIECHBAUM was present. I cannot recall how the conversation turned to OFCZAREK/SCHAEFFER. I was merely amazed when PONGER suddenly dropped the name of OFCZAREK, whom I, of course, know from my student days. Insofar as I can recall, PONGER remarked on this occasion that CIC was very angry with OFCZAREK since he, in violation of an agreement between CIC and SCHNEIDER, was still active intelligence-wise in Austria. Remarkably enough, I happened to meet OFCZAREK in his car at the German/Austrian border. I had already finished with the Customs official while PONGER and LAUBER were still arguing because the officials wanted to charge duty on some books and PONGER refused to pay this duty. PONGER came then outside and commented somewhat in the sense that it was indeed somewhat more than inept when someone as OFCZAREK had just done with the Customs officials, raced through the inspection so that even a blind man could see that such a man was acquainted with the border authorities. Whether PONGER or LAUBER had spoken with OFCZAREK

during the Customs inspection I don't know but I don't believe so, for certainly then, OPCZAREK would not have gone through so quickly. I also don't even know whether PONGER knows OPCZAREK personally. Regarding Dr. OPCZAREK, I would merely like to say that he, in my opinion, exactly as in the case of Col. KRIECHBAUM, can in no way be suspected of working with PONGER for the Russians. (From various sides in Austria, of course, such charges are made against OPCZAREK periodically, but these charges are based on his acquaintance with Dr. Kurt WESSELY who supposedly is active for the Russian or Hungarian IS. I could say several things about this, but I don't believe that OPCZAREK knew in detail about this individual although OPCZAREK employed WESSELY in his intelligence group and allegedly secretly still employs him. In this case it can only be, in my opinion, a matter of a certain good-naturedness on the part of OPCZAREK, as is the case with Dr. KNOLL, the son of OPCZAREK's co-worker, Prof. Curt KNOLL. This young KNOLL is a Communist (Unity Front) shop student in VOEST and is supposed to be delivering material about this firm through his father to OPCZAREK. KNOLL, Sr. appears to be absolutely alright, but understandably probably cannot part with his son). The second name which, intelligence-wise, appeared interesting was of the former SD Obersturmbahnfuehrer, Josef URBAN. PONGER was informed about this man astonishingly well and told me 2 years ago this man was an agent of the Americans, English, French, as well as the Austrian State Police intelligence service, which, however, had not prevented him from being at the same time the intelligence Chief of the Neo-Nazi group SOUCEK. A remark of PONGER's long ago, however, also suggested to me at that time that it was probable that URBAN also had connection to the Israeli IS. The basis for my thoughts I cannot recall.

(2)

any longer, since I have never interested myself in URBAN inasmuch as he is, in my opinion, not to be taken seriously in any respect.

Some points which possibly may be of interest I would like to mention briefly here. PONGER's earlier address was Vienna 5, Schoenbrunnerstrasse 47, and then later he gave me the address Vienna 4, Paulanergasse 7, as the location of his firm, The Central European Press and Literary Agency, Inc. When I asked him on one occasion why it happened that he, as an American, was living in a Russian district, he explained to me that apartments as well as office space was half as expensive in those districts as in the Western districts. Furthermore, whatever he had to conceal from the Russians, he did not keep in the Fourth district. Some time later in 1952 PONGER told me on his own initiative that an American officer, apparently one whom PONGER, as Reserve Officer, is subordinate to, directed him to appear and advised him to move out of the Russian district. He claims to have convinced this officer with his arguments that it was much cheaper for him in the Russian district as his brother-in-law, VERBER, for example, had required several years before he found a suitable apartment in the Western district.

Another perhaps not uninteresting occurrence, the first time I met VERBER --- I saw him, according to my memory, only twice --- he appeared with a very swollen eye. When I asked how he had got this, he explained that he and PONGER had been photographing strikers near the Paulanerkirche, in the course of which they had been beaten up and a Lica was stolen.

In closing, some characteristics of the people:

PONGER is, in my opinion, typical of the nationalistic Jew. According to many of his remarks he regarded himself much more as a Jew than as an Ameri-

(13) ~~SECRET~~

can. In so being, however, he was loyal to the Germans and above all, realistic. In our relations, he was always very pleasant without ever attempting through his favors to achieve favors from me. He never tried to pay for meals nor would he bring presents for the children, etc. He figured the price for his photos very fairly but definitely not so that he earned nothing thereby. He never attempted to gather from me information about anti-Soviet agents which, indeed, would have been most sacred to him if he really works for the Russians. That he did not want to recruit me for the Russians goes without saying since he was familiar with my uncompromising anti-Communist convictions, but he could have always made the attempt to approach me, so to speak, from the other side, that is, as alleged member of an American office which was attempting to build up an intelligence network against Russia. That, I would probably have believed, and would have provided him with an excellent opportunity for an intelligence game. That he didn't do this speaks against the suspicion that which speaks for the suspicion I have mentioned above.

PONGER's wife, whom I only saw once, made the impression upon me of being an exceptionally intelligent and assured person. I would like to suggest that she is the spiritual leader of this marriage and if there really was intelligence activity that she probably participated. PONGER was, in my opinion, in every way the subordinate, probably also sexually, as she made the impression upon me of being/very high-strung and temperamental woman, whereas he is more the opposite type.

About her brother, VERGER, I have only the vaguest impression. He appears to me to be very intelligent, courteous, but also very realistic. When PONGER, for example, in his presence, started to talk of his hobby-horse, ERICHMANN,

(14)

and the persecution of the Jews, VERBER would stop him immediately. These matters did not appear to be real problems to VERBER. VERBER is also very witty.

LAUBER made a very reserved and modest impression. Although seeming unpleasant, he demonstrated no political interest and I really cannot imagine that he could have been a Russian agent. His release from jail also certainly speaks for my impression. It is naturally a complicated affair to determine if and why PONGER and VERBER were Russian agents, but the trial in the beginning of March will clear this up. If it develops that the charges are true, I am convinced that Mrs. PONGER and her brother were the driving forces and indeed, scarcely from an ideological motive, but rather in order to earn money. PONGER would have been ideologically approachable although not as a Communist but as an anti-Conservative, that is to say, in the terms of the liberal strongly Jewish right of the Roosevelt Era in contrast to America of today.

One could also imagine that this entire espionage affair has been created by certain Jewish circles in order, by means of a trial in the course of which the innocence of PONGER and VERBER would be established, to demonstrate how innocent certain new American circles (i.e. Jewish) actually are, which circles are currently being persecuted. This version, however, is indeed very far-fetched although definitely a man such as PONGER could be recruited for such an affair and also possess the necessary good connections to World Judaism.

All these thoughts have been written down unsystematically and in all probability one or another interesting detail is missing in spite of my intensive concentration. I am available for further information at all times

~~SECRET~~

EGLA 334
Enc. 1

- 16 -

but must request again that this matter be handled as exceedingly confidential and that, under no conditions, it reach the business circles. At this point I would like to establish once again that I have absolutely no suspicion regarding Col. KRISCHBAUM or Dr. OFCZAREK. On the contrary, these two, in my opinion, are beyond/suspicion. I have only mentioned these connections because I, as an old intelligence man, am aware that in such a case, the most remote details are of interest but in no way do I give such details establishing such suspicions. It would be very unpleasant for me, therefore, when any suspicion of these two should be thereby aroused or should an investigation be started on the basis of this.

SECRET

201-2548

(16)

~~SECRET~~

301-301

3P

INTERVIEW WITH DR. WILHELM HOETTL: Reaction to Solitary Confinement

1. Confinement. A second interrogation of Dr. Wilhelm HOETTL was conducted at 11:00 AM in the cell where he was confined near Salzburg. From approximately 1:00 PM on 28 March 1953 until sometime the 30th of March 1953, HOETTL was held in solitary confinement in an uncomfortable cell adapted from a garage. On 31 March 1953, he was moved to another solitary cell adapted from a wine cellar under a villa near Salzburg. This cell contained no windows and was generally chilly and uncomfortable, though by no means unbearably so. During the period of confinement HOETTL had been permitted to have a typewriter and paper in his cell and had been encouraged to write down any information which, as he was told, might be helpful to himself or to his interrogators.

2. Dr. Hoettl's Complaints. HOETTL complained to the interrogator that the cell in which he had been confined was uninhabitable and that he had in effect been submitted to torture. He stated that on the previous night he had had a heart attack and that he had been afraid that he would die and that his attempts to get assistance by shouting on the door had brought no response from his jailers. The interrogator stated that as a matter of fact HOETTL was probably in more healthy circumstances than he would be if he were out exercising on the streets. Although the room was somewhat cooler than those in which he would normally live, he was still able to row as much as he wished and this rest could hardly be said to injure his heart. The interrogator added that if HOETTL should die suddenly during the night while in confinement it would present no particular problem since disposal of a cold body is not much more difficult than disposal of a warm one. The interrogator added that he had a particular wish that HOETTL should die.

3. Response to Questions

a) HOETTL maintained under questioning that he had nothing to add concerning his relations with Kurt PÖGNER or with any other of the personalities mentioned during previous interrogations. The interrogator covered a certain amount of old ground in attempting to develop a new line of questioning concerning the PÖGNER case but learned nothing new from HOETTL about his activity in this case.

b) Unknown Friends B. On being quizzed again concerning the identity of "Anti-Me" or the mysterious "Friends B" who had been mentioned in the letter sent to HOETTL (see previous report), HOETTL continued to maintain that he did not know to whom HOETTL referred. After much pressure on this point, HOETTL finally said that the only B he could think of would be Mr. Anton BOEHN.

c) Relations with US Agencies. The interrogator quizzed HOETTL at some length on his knowledge of the present organization of the United States intelligence agencies. It was clear from HOETTL's answers that HOETTL believes that the situation prevailing in 1952-53 continues in American Intelligence: rivalry and intrigue between C.I.A. and D.E.A.; rivalry and intrigue between C.I.A. and C-2 in Austria; definitely D.E.A. has been plotting of secret rivalries as the existed in 1947 and 1948 particularly in regard to S.H.A. (SIS); rivalry and intrigue between United States Army and CIA (part of C.I.A.).

~~SECRET~~
SECURITY INFORMATION

①

~~301-257481~~

Att #2 to
EGLA-3281

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

SECRET
SECURITY INFORMATION

-2-

loyalty and is trying to cover his tracks; all other US intelligence agencies. It is unclear to the interrogator just how HOETTL carried out this pattern of intrigues in his own mind but evidently he hoped to be able eventually to solve all his own problems by applying directly to Mr. Allan Dulles. The interrogator is inclined to take the view that this curious group of opinions, combined with HOETTL's nature inclination towards intrigues and his general cast of mind, which suggests the early stages of schizophrenia, motivates him to withhold information which in his mind would cause any American agency to be hostile to him because of his activities on behalf of another American agency. There is also some indication that he had attempted to penetrate or at least to gather information on intelligence offices which do too to be American-controlled and which he assumed to have something to do with Mr. Dulles. He would naturally be most reticent about this activity because it could be interpreted by Mr. Dulles, whom he believes to take a direct personal interest in local operations as hostile.

b. HOETTL's Proposals

a) Johnson SANITZER. Always the operator, HOETTL took occasion during this interrogation to propose that he be employed by United States Intelligence by establishing contact with Johnson SANITZER, a former double agent operator of the German intelligence service who is now thought to be active on behalf of the Soviets. HOETTL proposed to reestablish contact with SANITZER's wife, or to attempt to make a connection with SANITZER through Dr. Othmar TRETER, Dr. Karl BENKE, or Ing. Karl KARLIK. The interrogator permitted HOETTL to expatiate at sufficient length to determine that HOETTL does not in fact know very much about SANITZER, either in the present or in the past. It is noteworthy that in a written memorandum which HOETTL had prepared on his typewriter before the interrogation containing the same proposal he was unable to spell SANITZER's name correctly. (He spelled it SANZER). The interrogator then told HOETTL that he obviously did not know very much about the man and would not be qualified to operate in such a capacity, even if we were to change our entire orientation and decided that he could be trusted with such an assignment.

b) Possible Agent Proposal. HOETTL then suggested that he might be employed to establish contact with the Soviet intelligence office which had operated WILHELM and PONDRIS. When the interrogator asked whether HOETTL really believed that after having been arrested and interrogated by the Americans he would be accepted by Soviet intelligence in Vienna as a reliable person, HOETTL explained that he did not intend himself to travel to Vienna or to establish direct contact but that he thought perhaps by way to PONDRIS's wife he might establish an interest in Soviet minds which would cause them to send somebody to contact him. All readers of this report will doubtless be relieved to be told that the interrogator did not accept HOETTL's offer.

c. Future Plans

a) After this re-interrogation of HOETTL it was decided that a press release would be prepared implicating HOETTL in the VERGER-PONDRIS case and that this press release would be made public if concurrence was received from the Department of Justice in Washington.

SECRET
SECURITY INFORMATION

(2)

EPA 3281.

SECRET
SECURITY INFORMATION

It was decided that nothing was to be written about the case. It was believed that given out the full story before word got around of the story would anger First in the movement so that they would be more inclined to attack him publicly before publishing his story.

SECRET

③

201-2541

2 0 7 1 5 2 0 7